

STUDY EXAMINES EFFORTS TO OFFER HEALTH CARE SERVICES TO LOW-INCOME AND UNINSURED

[AP/USA Today](#) examined efforts by health officials and specialists nationwide "to address glaring disparities in U.S. health care" by expanding health screenings and lifestyle education programs to places where uninsured and low-income residents most often gather.

A number of states are conducting education programs for barbers and beauticians to help them teach their clients about stroke symptoms and the importance of screenings, while many churches are hosting blood pressure exams and health education fairs.

Georges Benjamin of the [American Public Health Association](#) said, "The most important principle here is going where the people are," adding, "There no reason you can't do immunizations there, no reason you can't do nutritional counseling there. It makes a lot of sense."

(Neergaard, *AP/USA Today*, 12/25/07).



Adam W. Hamm
Insurance Commissioner

Welcome to the RxConnector Newsletter!

Dear Friends,

This newsletter is designed to keep you up to date about the Prescription Connection for ND program and to keep you in the know about the various prescription assistance programs that are available. In addition, from time to time, we may also include other items of interest related to Medicare and the State Health Insurance Counseling (SHIC) program.

As always, thank you so much for all that you do for the Prescription Connection program! Without your help, our work would be that much harder. Your efforts are valued and appreciated!

If you have items of interest that you think should be included in this newsletter, we'd like to hear about them! Please contact Sharon St. Aubin by email at ssaubin@nd.gov or call her toll free at 888.575.6611.

Adam W. Hamm
Insurance Commissioner

**Contact the
Department:**

**1.888.575.6611
insurance@nd.gov
www.nd.gov/ndins**

**NORTH
DAKOTA**

a program of the
North Dakota
Insurance Department

**Prescription
Connection**
for North Dakota

NEW ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE WITH THE RC-200 PHONE + ABLE PHONE VOICE DIALER

Has the phone become a source of frustration for you? Is the thought of struggling with those small numbers on the keypad keeping you from using the phone altogether?

The RC-200 remote activated speakerphone by Clarity might be the phone for you. It stores 20 numbers and is a high-fidelity speakerphone with amplification. Couple the RC-200 with the Able-Phone 5000-200 voice dialer and using the phone could be an enjoyable experience once again.

The voice dialer verbally prompts you for programming of up to 60 numbers. Once programmed, you can just use your voice to dial the number.

You may qualify to receive the phone and the voice dialer for free through the North Dakota Telecommunications Equipment Distribution

Service (TEDS.) Contact IPAT staff for more information at 1-800-265-4728.

IPAT was once again awarded a contract through the ND Department of Human Services to provide assistive safety devices and services. This program has been established to help state residents who are at least 60 years old, not living in a nursing facility, and continue to remain safely in their homes.

Participating on this program is voluntary and is at no cost to the participant. Devices that can be provided to promote safety include, but are not limited to smoke alarms, automated medication dispensers with an alarm and lock, electric jar openers and uplift seat assists.

For further information contact Connie at 1-866-673-6703.

NEW GIVEBACK MATCH FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR DONORS

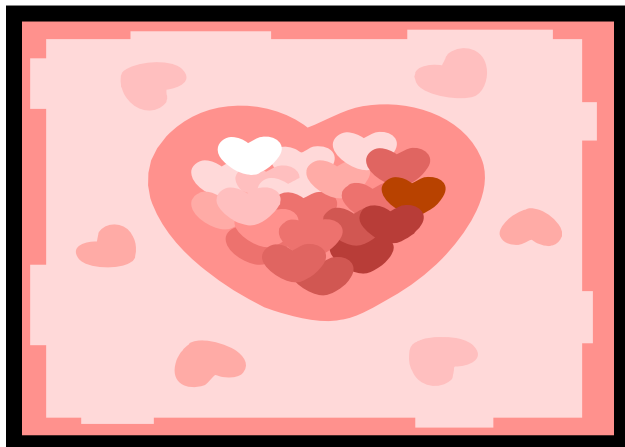
Each year Dakota Medical Foundation's Board of Directors approves match funding for a select group of nonprofit partners. This year, the board has approved over \$1 million in matching funds for GiveBack nonprofits. One of the DMF named Funds/Initiatives is the Prescription Assistance Initiative. DMF does not assess any administrative fees.

For more information on these opportunities or to make a contribution, please contact Jennifer Thompson at 701-356-2655.

LOTREL IS NO LONGER AVAILABLE THROUGH RX ACCESS

The website, NeedyMeds, states that Lotrel is available through RxAccess. However, that is no longer correct. RxAccess does not include Astra Zeneca Medications.

The Partnership for Prescription Assistance refers patients that use Lotrel to www.yourrxcard.com and/or www.freedrugcard.us and or E Sun Patient Card 1-866-662-1351 and/or PS card at www.pscard.com



TAX AIDE FOR ALL AGES

The AARP Tax-Aide sites in North Dakota are open for business Feb. 1.

AARP Tax-Aide is the nation's largest, free, volunteer-run tax counseling and preparation service, where volunteers commit their time and talents to help their neighbors.

This service is available to middle and low-

income taxpayers of all ages with special attention to those 60 and older.

For information call toll-free 888-227-7669 or visit www.aarp.org/taxaide.

The AARP Foundation administers Tax-Aide in cooperation with the IRS.

CASE FLASH PART D PREMIUM WITHHOLDING

In an effort to continually share examples and case studies of customer issues and how to best respond, we share the following example:

Mrs. F recently decided to change from her Medicare private health plan to Original Medicare with Part D prescription drug coverage from a stand-alone drug plan. She chose to have her Part D monthly premium taken out of her Social Security check, rather than being billed directly for it.

The next month, the plan automatically deducted the monthly premium from her check. However, when Mrs. F went to the pharmacy, her pharmacist said that the plan's records showed that she was not enrolled in the plan. Mrs. F would have to pay the full price of her prescription. Not sure of what to do, she went home without her medication. Mrs. F called the plan, which informed her that she was not enrolled.

Mrs. F called the Medicare Rights Center (MRC) and spoke to a counselor. Together on the phone line, the MRC counselor and Mrs. F called 800-Medicare. They explained to the

Medicare representative that while the plan was deducting Part D premiums from her Social Security check, it was not covering Mrs. F.

At the MRC counselor's request, the Medicare representative called the plan and put everyone together in a conference call. The Medicare representative explained to the plan that Mrs. F had enrolled at the appropriate time and the plan must provide her coverage. The Medicare representative asked the plan representative to change the plan's records to reflect Mrs. F's enrollment. When Mrs. F went back to the pharmacy, she only had to pay the plan's co-payment for her prescription.

Afterward, the MRC counselor encouraged Mrs. F to be billed directly for her monthly Part D premium. This way, the MRC counselor explained, Mrs. F could monitor her charges more closely so that she would not be paying for coverage she was not actually receiving, and so that she was certain that she was being charged the correct amount each month. Mrs. F then called her plan and requested to be billed directly for her monthly premium.

Medicare Watch, Jan 2008

FDA ALERT ON BIO-IDENTICAL HORMONE REPLACEMENT THERAPY

The FDA is concerned that unfounded claims are misleading women and health care professionals about products known as "bio-identical hormone replacement therapy" (BHRT) for relief of the symptoms of menopause.

For more information press Control and Click at the same time on the following underlined title.

[Bio-Identicals: Sorting Myths from Facts](#)

TYSABRI APPROVED BY FSA

On January 14, 2008, FDA approved Tysabri (natalizumab) for certain patients with moderate-to-severe Crohn's disease. The drug has been approved for patients with evidence of inflammation who have had an inadequate response to, or are unable to tolerate, conventional therapies for Crohn's disease.

More information is available at [Facts About Crohn's Disease](#)

PRAM-O-GRAM FACT SHEET AVAILABLE

The PRAM-O-GRAM (Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System) fact sheet series is available online at <http://www.ndkidscount.org/health/pregnancyprenatalcare.htm#pub>.

Please extend the information to others who may be interested.

The PRAM-O-GRAM fact sheet series will include a total of nine publications in 2007-08.

2007 FDA APPROVED MEDICATIONS

The [FDA](#) in 2007 approved 19 new medications, a decrease from 22 in 2006 and the lowest number since 1983, when the agency approved 14 new treatments, according to Ira Loss of Washington Analysis, [Bloomberg/Arizona Daily Star](#) reports. According to Loss, the FDA in 2007 approved 17 "new molecular entities" and two biotechnology medications.

QUALIFYING FOR MEDICARE

There are only three ways you can get Medicare coverage if you are under 65.

In addition to being a U.S. citizen or having your resident Visa, and having lived in the U.S. for five years in a row; you must fall into one of the following categories:

- 1) Have a disability and be receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) for more than 24 months;
- 2) Be diagnosed with End-Stage Renal Disease (ESRD);
- 3) Be diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), commonly known as Lou Gehrig's Disease.

Because Social Security eligibility rules are complex, you should call Social Security at 800-772-1213 to get the most accurate information regarding your particular situation.

Information *Medicare Rights Center*